CATASAUQUA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

No. **236**

SECTION: **Pupils**

TITLE: **Threat Assessment**

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236 — THREAT ASSESSMENT

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1. Purpose

Public School Code § 1302-E

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of its students and the school community, and providing the resources and support to address identified student needs. The Board adopts this policy to address student behavior that may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school, employees, school, facilities, the community, and others.

2. Definitions

Public School Code § 1301-E

A. Behavioral Service Provider.

For purposes of this policy, the term "behavioral service provider" includes, but is not limited to, a state, county, or local behavioral health service provider, crisis intervention center, or psychiatric hospital. The term includes a private service provider which contracts with a state, county, or local government to act as a behavioral health agency.

B. Individualized Management Plan.

For purposes of this policy, the term "Individualized Management Plan" means a plan developed for a student who is referred to the threat assessment team that documents the concerns that brought a student to the team's attention, as well as the resources and supports a student might need based on the information gathered during the assessment.

C. Student Threat.

For purposes of this policy, the term "Student Threat" means behavior of a student which constitutes a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school, facilities, the community, or others.

D. Threat Assessment.

For purposes of this policy, the term "threat assessment" means a fact-based process for the assessment of, and intervention with, students whose behaviors may indicate a Student Threat.

3. Delegation of Responsibility

Public School Code § 1302-E(a)(2)(ii)

The Board directs the Superintendent or his/her designee to implement this policy and develop and implement procedures and administrative regulations for assessing and intervening with students whose behaviors may indicate a Student Threat.

4. Threat Assessment Teams

Public School Code § 1302-E(a)(1), (2)(i)

A. In General.

The Superintendent or his/her designee, in consultation with the School Safety and Security Coordinator, shall appoint individuals to a threat assessment team at each school building in the District.

B. Membership.

Public School Code § 1302-E(b)(1)(i), (ii)

Each threat assessment team shall—

1. Include individuals with expertise in:

   a. school health;

   b. counseling, school psychology, or social work;

   c. special education; and

   d. school administration; and

2 Include:

   a. the School Safety and Security Coordinator or his/her designee;

   b. other school staff or community resources who may serve as regular team members or be consulted during the threat assessment process, as appropriate, and as determined necessary by the team, including, but not limited to:

      i. school security personnel;

      ii. law enforcement agency representation;

iii. behavioral health professionals;

iv. the individual identified by the District to receive reports from the Safe2Say program;

v. an individual who serves on the student assistance program;

vi. juvenile probation professionals;

vii. suicide prevention coordinators;

viii. members of the Safe2Say Something crisis team or a crisis response/ crisis intervention team.

Public School Code § 1302-E(a)(2)(i), (b)(1)(iii)

C. Team Leader.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall designate a member of each threat assessment team as team leader for that team.

D. Training.

Public School Code § 1302-E (a)(2)(iii), (b)(1)(vi)

The School Safety and Security Coordinator shall ensure that threat assessment team members are provided annually with individual and/or group training consistent with nationally recognized best practices during paid working hours or as in-service training, on:

1. Responsibilities of threat assessment team members.

2. The process of identifying, reporting, assessing, responding to, and intervening with threats.

3. Identifying and avoiding racial, cultural, or disability bias.

4. Confidentiality requirements under state and federal laws and regulations, and Board policies.

5. Youth suicide awareness, prevention, and response.

6. Trauma-informed approach.

7. Safe2Say Something procedures.

8. Positive behavioral intervention and support.

See, e.g., Public School Code § 1302-E(b)(2)

Threat assessment team training shall be credited toward continuing professional education requirements and school safety and security training requirements as required by law, or permitted by law and Board policy.

5. Response to Reports

A. In General.

The threat assessment team shall:

Public School Code § 1302-E(b)(1)(iv)(D)-(F)

1. Document, assess, and respond to reports received regarding students whose behavior may indicate a Student Threat.

2. Assist in assessing and responding to reports that are received through the Safe2Say Something program identifying students who may be a threat to themselves or others.

3. Assess and respond to reports of students exhibiting self-harm or suicide risk factors or warning signs, as identified in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.

B. Preliminary Determinations.

1. Potential Student Threat.

Public School Code § 1302-E(b)(1)(v), (c)(1)

When the threat assessment team has made a preliminary determination that a student's reported behavior may indicate a Student Threat, the team shall immediately take the following steps:

a. Notify the Superintendent or his/her designee and the School Safety and Security Coordinator of the reported threat.

b. Notify the building principal of the school the student attends of the reported threat. The building principal or his/her designee shall then immediately notify the student's parent or guardian. The threat assessment team shall ensure the parents and guardians are so notified.

2. Immediate Threat or Emergency.

Public School Code § 1302-E(c)(4)(i)

When a reported student's behavior indicates that there may be an imminent threat to the safety of the student or others, or an emergency situation, a threat assessment team member shall take immediate action, which may include promptly reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agency and school administration.

3. Potential Child Abuse.

Public School Code § 1302-E(c)(4)(ii)

Where a threat assessment team member has reasonable cause to suspect that a reported situation indicates that a student may be a victim of child abuse, the member shall make a report of suspected child abuse in accordance with law and Board policy.

C. Other Specific Procedures.

In investigating, assessing, and responding to threat reports, the threat assessment team shall make a determination if the report should be addressed under one or more specific Board policies or administrative regulations besides this Policy, based on the subject matter of the report and the requirements of law, regulations, and Board policy, including, but not limited to, reports involving:

1. Discrimination/Harassment.
2. Bullying/Cyberbullying.
3. Suicide Awareness and Prevention.
4. Hazing.
5. Dating Violence.

D. Threat Assessment Procedures.

Members of the threat assessment team shall engage in an assessment of the reported student behavior that may indicate a Student Threat, in accordance with training and established procedures. This process may include, but is not limited to:

1. Interviewing the student, other students, staff, parents/guardians, or others regarding the subject(s) of the reported threat.
2. Reviewing existing academic, health, and disciplinary records and assignments, as appropriate, regarding the subject(s) of the report.
3. Conducting searches of lockers, storage spaces, and other possessions on school property, as applicable, in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

4. Examining outside resources, such as social media sites, in coordination with law enforcement, or contacting law-enforcement, juvenile probation, or community agencies to request additional information about the subject(s) of the report, in accordance with law, regulations, and Board policies.

5. Where appropriate, convening the appropriate team to assess and/or address the situation that is the subject of the report, such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, Section 504 Team, Behavior Support Team, Student Assistance program, team, or others.

The threat assessment team shall establish and implement procedures, in accordance with the District's Memorandum of Understanding with each law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over school property, to address situations where the investigation of a reported threat shall be transferred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Public School Code § 1302-E(e)

The threat assessment team may request that the county agency or juvenile probation department consult and cooperate with the team in assessing the student who is the subject of a preliminary determination regarding a student threat.

E. Determination of No Student Threat.

When assessment of a student's behavior determines that it does not constitute a Student Threat, the threat assessment team shall document the assessment and may refer the student to other appropriate resources, such as a child study team, the Student Assistance Program team, an IEP or Section 504 team, or other District supports and services.

F. Interventions.

1. Individualized Management Plan.

The threat assessment team shall develop an Individualized Management Plan for each student identified and assessed as posing a Student Threat. The Plan should document the team's evaluation of the threat and recommendations for disposition of the threat, including the information gathered during the assessment and recommendations for response and intervention.

2. Referrals and Other Actions.

Public School Code § 1302-E(c)(2), (3), (4)(iii)

Following notification to the student's parent/guardian, the threat assessment team may refer the student to an appropriate program or take action to address the reported situation in accordance with applicable Board policy, which may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

a. A referral to the Student Assistance Program. Nothing in this Policy shall limit the authority of the District to refer a student to the Student Assistance Program without referral by a threat assessment team where the student's behavior does not indicate a Student Threat.

b. A referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

c. An appropriate evaluation to determine whether the student is a qualified student with the disability in need of a Section 504 Service Agreement or in need of special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.

d. A referral to the student's IEP team to review and address the student's IEP and/or Positive Behavior Support Plan. This could include, but is not limited to, a manifestation determination or functional behavioral assessment in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

e. A referral to the student's Section 504 team to review and address the student's Section 504 Service Agreement and/or Positive Behavior Support Plan.

f. A referral to a behavioral service provider, health care provider, or county agency, *provided* that a parent or guardian shall provide consent prior to the referral.

g. Addressing behavior in accordance with applicable discipline policies and the Code of Student Conduct.

h. Ongoing monitoring of the student by the threat assessment team, a child study team, Student Assistance Program team, or other appropriate school personnel.

i. Taking step to address the safety of any potential targets identified by the reported threat.

G. School Safety and Security Incident Reporting.

Public School Code §§ 1306.2-B(b)(2), (3); 1319-B(b)

35 PA. STAT. ANN. § 780-102

1. Incident.

For reporting purposes, the term "incident" means an instance involving an act of violence; the possession of a weapon; the possession, use, or sale of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined in the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act; or the possession, use, or sale of alcohol or tobacco products, by any person on school property, or conduct that constitutes an offense listed in § 1319-B(b)(7) of the Public School Code. A "discretionary incident" means conduct that constitutes an offense listed in § 1319-B(b)(8) of the Public School Code or other offense that occurs on school property.

Public School Code §§ 1306.2-B(b)(2), (3); 1319-B(b)

2. Required and Discretionary Reporting.

When a reported threat also meets the definition of an "incident" in accordance with reporting requirements, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall immediately report the incident, if not previously reported by District staff, and may report "discretionary incidents" committed by students on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding with law enforcement, and Board policies.

3. Notification of Parents/Guardians.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify the parent/guardian, if not previously notified by District staff, of any student directly involved in an incident or discretionary incident on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on a conveyance, providing transportation, to or from a school or school-sponsor activity, who is a victim or suspect, immediately or as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee will inform the parent/guardian whether or not the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee will document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian..

H. Students with Disabilities.

When reporting an incident or discretionary incident committed by a student with a disability or referring a student with a disability to a law enforcement agency, the District shall provide the information required by state and federal laws and regulations, and shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by these authorities. The District shall ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act when transmitting copies of the student's special education and disciplinary records.

20 U.S.C. § 1232g

6. Monitoring and Management of Plans

If a student has an Individualized Management Plan, the threat assessment team shall monitor the Individualized Management Plan and coordinate with the designated team or resource to provide support and follow-up assessment as necessary. Follow-up assessments, referrals, re-entry plans, and other supports shall be documented as part of the student's Individualized Management Plan.

The threat assessment team, in coordination with other appropriate teams and supports, shall determine when the student's Individualized Management Plan is no longer needed for disposition of the threats, and may transfer appropriate information in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

7. Records Access and Confidentiality

Public School Code § 1302-E(d)

In order to carry out their duties and facilitate the timely assessment of an intervention with students whose behavior may indicate a Student Threat, the threat assessment team shall have access to the following student information to the extent permitted under applicable law and regulations:

1. Student health records.

2. Prior school disciplinary records.

3. Records related to adjudications under applicable law and regulations.

4. Records of prior behavioral or mental health or psychological evaluations or screenings maintained by the District..

5. Other records or information that may be relevant to evaluating a threat or determining treatment or referral options for a student that are maintained by the District.

Public School Code § 1302-E(f)

The threat assessment team shall use the information or records obtained in fulfilling the team's duty in accordance with law to evaluate a threat or to recommend disposition of a threat. No member of a team may redisclose any record or information obtained or otherwise use any record of a student beyond the purpose for which the disclosure was made to the team.

The threat assessment team shall maintain confidentiality and handle all student records in accordance with applicable law, regulations, Board policy, the Student Records Plan, and the District's legal and investigative obligations.

Threat assessment team members whose other assignments and rules require confidentiality of specific student communications, in accordance with law, shall ensure that all confidential communications and information are addressed in accordance with applicable law, regulations, Board policy, and administrative regulations.

8. Annual Report to the School Board

Public School Code § 1302-E(a)(2)(v), (b)(1)(iv)(G)

The Superintendent or his/her designee, after consultation with the School Safety and Security Coordinator, shall annually develop and present to the School Board at an executive session a report generally outlining the District's approach to threat assessment, which shall include the following information:

1. A verification that the District is in compliance with Article XIII-E of the Public School Code.

2. The number and composition of the District's threat assessment teams.

3. The total number of threats assessed that year

4. A summary of interactions with outside law enforcement agencies, juvenile probation, and behavioral service providers.

5. An assessment of the operation of the District's threat assessment teams.

6. Recommendations for improvement of the District's threat assessment processes.

7. Any additional information determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Items 1-3 above, and some or all of the information in item 7 above, shall also be submitted to the School Safety and Security Coordinator for inclusion in the required report under Public School Code § 1309-B(c)(5) to the state School Safety and Security Committee. The threat assessment teams shall provide information to the Superintendent to make the report to the Board.

9. Information for Students, Parents/Guardians, and Staff

Public School Code § 1303-E(a)(2)(iv), (b)(1)(iv)(A)-(C)

The District shall annually notify students, parents/guardians, and staff about the existence and purpose of the threat assessment teams through posting information on the District website, publishing in handbooks, and through other appropriate methods.

A. For Students and Parents/Guardians.

The threat assessment teams shall make available age-appropriate informational materials to students regarding recognition of threatening or at risk behavior that may present a Student Threat, and how to report their concerns, including through the Safe2Say Something program and other District reporting hotlines or methods. The informational materials shall be available for review by parents/guardians.

B. For School Employees.

The threat assessment team shall make available informational materials for school employees regarding recognition of threatening or at risk behavior that may present a Student Threat, and how to report their concerns, including through the Safe2Say Something program and other District reporting hotlines or methods. Information for school employees shall include a list of the staff members who have been appointed to the threat assessment teams.

C. Staff Training.

The District shall annually provide mandatory training for school staff on identification or recognition of student behavior that may indicate a Student Threat, in accordance with law, Board policy, and the standards specified by the state School Safety and Security Committee.