Information Sheet – 5/9/17 - Board of Trustees Meeting

TO: Board of Trustees Item: 5.2

FR: Celli Coeville

DATE: May 4, 2017

RE: Revise BP/AR 5141.52 Suicide Prevention, First Reading

(BP/AR 5141.52 revised) – The board policy and administrative regulation are substantially revised to reflect NEW LAW (AB 2246, 2016) which mandates districts serving grades 7-12 to adopt policy on suicide prevention, intervention and postvention by the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. The board policy and administrative regulation reflect the mandate to address any related staff development to be provided to teachers in grades 7-12 and to address the needs of specific high-risk student populations.

In addition, the board policy and administrative regulation add best practices in prevention, intervention and postvention including, but not limited to, student instruction, crisis intervention procedures, follow-up care for a student who threatens or attempts suicide, and the provision of counseling and other and other postvention strategies to reduce suicide contagion. This is a first reading of the revision.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the Governing Board of any district serving students in grades 7-12 adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (i.e., intervention conducted after a suicide) with specified components. Those components are addressed in the following policy and the accompanying administrative regulation. Also see the California Department of Education's model policy required by Education Code 215.

Note: The following policy and accompanying administrative regulation should be revised to reflect district practice. Pursuant to Education Code 215, the policy must be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. It is recommended that districts also consult with legal counsel and the district's risk manager or insurance carrier, as appropriate.

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a ~~major~~ leading cause of death among youth ~~and should be taken seriously~~ and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. ~~In order~~ To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures ~~preventive~~ and strategies ~~and intervention procedures~~ for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

In developing measures and strategies for use by the district, ~~The~~ the Superintendent or designee may ~~involve~~ consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies ~~and~~ mental health professionals, and community organizations. ~~in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention.~~

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)
(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

~~**Prevention and Instruction**~~

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy address any training to be provided to teachers of students in grades 7-12 on suicide awareness and prevention. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate. In addition, Education Code 49604 encourages each district to provide suicide prevention training at least once to each middle, junior high, and high school counselor. Item #1 may be revised to specify other categories of employees who will receive the training.

~~Suicide prevention~~ Such measures and strategies ~~may~~ shall include, but not be limited to:

~~efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.~~

SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students in the secondary grades

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

Note: Items #2-7 below reflect optional strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and may be revised to reflect district practice.

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)
(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)
(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)
(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)
(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis

5. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions

6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts

7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, those listed in the following paragraph. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate.

SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. (Education Code 215)

~~*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*~~
~~*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*~~
~~*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*~~
~~*(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)*~~
~~*(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)*~~

~~The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-esteem. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in the secondary grades. Such instruction shall be aligned with state content standards and shall be designed to help students analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, including potential suicide, and to identify suicide prevention strategies.~~

~~*(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)*~~

~~The Superintendent or designee may offer parents/guardians education or information which describes the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.~~

~~**Intervention**~~

~~Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor. The principal or counselor shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible and may refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.~~
~~*(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)*~~

~~Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.~~

~~Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall complete the suicide prevention curriculum, including identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.~~

~~*(cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)*~~

~~The Superintendent or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that a suicide occurs or an attempt is made on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.~~

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE
215 Student suicide prevention policies
32280-32289 Comprehensive safety plan
~~*41533 Professional Development Block Grant, suicide prevention training for teachers*~~
49060-49079 Student records
49602 Confidentiality of student information
49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors
GOVERNMENT CODE
810-996.6 Government Claims Act
PENAL CODE
11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE
5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act
COURT DECISIONS
Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS
Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
~~*Youth Suicide Prevention Guidelines for California Schools, 2005*~~
Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2003
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS
School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS
Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS
Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012
National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, ~~*2001*~~ *rev. 2012*
WEB SITES
American Association of Suicidology: http://www.suicidology.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: http://afsp.org
American Psychological Association: http://www.apa.org
American School Counselor Association: http://www.schoolcounselor.org
California Department of Education, Mental Health: http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh
California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program:
~~*California Department of Mental Health, Children and Youth Programs:*~~
~~*http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Services_and_Programs/Children_and_Youth*~~
http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health: http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth
National Association of School Psychologists: http://www.nasponline.org
National Institute for Mental Health: http://www.nimh.nih.gov
Trevor Project: http://thetrevorproject.org
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: http://www.samhsa.gov

CSBA Sample
Administrative Regulation
Suicide Prevention

AR 5141.52
Students

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), districts serving students in grades 7-12 are mandated to adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (i.e., intervention conducted after a suicide). See the accompanying Board policy. The following administrative regulation provides additional strategies that fulfill the mandate and may be revised to reflect district practice.

Note: Examples of suicide prevention strategies are available in the California Department of Education's (CDE) model policy created in response to AB 2246, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, and resources issued by other state and federal agencies and organizations. For further information about strategies to protect students from bullying, cyberbullying, and other harassment, see BP 5131 - Conduct, BP 5131.2 - Bullying, BP 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment, and BP 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior.

Staff Development

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy and procedures address any training to be provided to teachers of students in grades 7-12 on suicide awareness and prevention. In addition, Education Code 49604 encourages each district to provide suicide prevention training at least once to each middle, junior high, and high school counselor. The following section may be revised to reflect district practice.

Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, counselors, and other district employees who interact with students at the secondary level. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor/psychologist and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

Materials for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services at the school site and within the community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Materials also may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials. (Education Code 215)

Staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy specifically address the needs of high-risk groups; see the accompanying Board policy. One strategy to specifically address their needs is to increase staff awareness of the higher rates of suicide among these groups, as provided in item #1 below.

1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth

Note: Staff development may include training about risk factors associated with suicide, as provided in item #2 below. Information about risk factors is available from the CDE, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Trevor Project, and other agencies and organizations.

2. Individual risk factors such as previous suicide attempt(s) or self-harm, history of depression or mental illness, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors

(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)

3. Warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, or suicidal intentions, such as changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent

4. Protective factors that may help to decrease a person's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community

5. Instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health

6. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups

(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)
(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)

7. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide

Instruction

***Note: The state's content standards for health education include voluntary standards

pertaining to mental, emotional, and social health at selected elementary and secondary grades and suicide prevention instruction at grade 7 or 8 and in high school. The district may revise the following paragraph to reflect grade levels offered by the district.***

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students and shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum at appropriate secondary grades and shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide

2. Develop coping and resiliency skills and self-esteem

3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent

4. Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)
(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)
(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)
(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)

Intervention

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy and procedures address suicide intervention. The following section should be revised to reflect district practice.

Note: In addition, the district may choose to incorporate crisis intervention strategies in its comprehensive school safety plan adopted pursuant to Education Code 32280-32289; see BP/AR 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan.

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor.

Note: Education Code 49602 generally protects the confidentiality of information of a personal nature disclosed to a school counselor by a student age 12 years or older or by a parent/guardian. However, in certain circumstances, the counselor may disclose such information to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. Also see BP 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor shall generally not be revealed, released, referenced, or discussed with third parties, the counselor may report to the principal or student's parents/guardians when he/she has reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. In addition, the counselor may disclose information of a personal nature to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for treatment. (Education Code 49602)

(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of his/her credential or license. An employee is not authorized to diagnose or treat mental illness unless he/she is specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall receive training that includes identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

(cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:

1. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary

2. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened

3. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene

4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)
(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

The principal or designee shall document the incident in writing, including the steps that the school took in response to the suicide attempt or threat.

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Note: The following paragraph is optional. If a student's parents/guardians refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at risk for suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether a referral to child protective services for child neglect is needed. Pursuant to Penal Code 11164-11174.3, the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, school employees who are mandated reporters are required to report child abuse or neglect, as defined in law, when they have knowledge of or reasonably suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect. See BP/AR 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting.

The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If the parent/guardian does not access treatment for the student, the Superintendent or designee may meet with the parent/guardian to identify barriers to treatment and assist the family in providing follow-up care for the student. If follow-up care is still not provided, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether he/she is required, pursuant to laws for mandated reporters of child neglect, to refer the matter to the local child protective services agency.

(cf. 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting)

For any student returning to school after a mental health crisis, the principal or designee and/or school counselor may meet with the parents/guardians and, if appropriate, with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school.

Postvention

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy and procedures address suicide postvention. The following section should be revised to reflect district practice.

In the event that a student dies by suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall communicate with the student's parents/guardians to offer condolences, assistance, and resources. In accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the parents/guardians regarding facts that may be divulged to other students, parents/guardians, and staff.

Note: Research has identified an increased risk of suicide among youth who are grieving the suicide of another (so-called "suicide contagion"). The National Association of School Psychologists, in its Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, recommends that memorials should be implemented with care so as not to sensationalize or glamorize suicide and thereby increase the suicide risk to other students. If a memorial is conducted for a student who dies by suicide, the association suggests a living memorial, such as making donations to a local crisis center, participating in an event that raises awareness about suicide prevention, or providing other opportunities for service activities in the school.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement procedures to address students' and staff's grief

and to minimize the risk of imitative suicide or suicide contagion. He/she shall provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

Any response to media inquiries shall be handled by the district-designated spokesperson who shall not divulge confidential information. The district's response shall not sensationalize suicide and shall focus on the district's postvention plan and available resources.

(cf. 1112- Media Relations)

After any suicide or attempted suicide by a student, the Superintendent or designee shall provide an opportunity for all staff who responded to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

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SUICIDE PREVENTION

Instruction

At appropriate secondary grades, the district's suicide prevention instruction shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, and loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide

2. Identify alternatives to suicide and develop coping skills

3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent

4. Identify community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)
(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)
(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)
(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)

Crisis Intervention Procedures

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall:

1. Ensure the student's physical safety by one of the following, as appropriate:

a. Securing immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred

b. Securing law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened

c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene

(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

2. Designate specific individuals to be promptly contacted, including the school counselor, psychologist, nurse, superintendent, and/or the student's parent/guardian, and, as necessary, local law enforcement or mental health agencies

SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

3. Document the incident in writing as soon as feasible

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

4. Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed

5. Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at the school

6. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions

In the event that a suicide occurs or is attempted on campus, the principal or designee shall follow the crisis intervention procedures contained in the school safety plan. After consultation with the Superintendent or designee and the student's parents/guardians about facts that may be divulged in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the principal or designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)
(cf. 1112- Media Relations)