

In Sacramento County over 20% of high school students report seriously considering suicide.

Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives. Staff  
**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Financial Considerations:** Grant funding has been secured to provide mandated training to staff. Training for parents and community members has been available for the past 4 years through free Youth Mental Health First Aid classes, and will continue to be offered throughout the year. Staff will continue working with the Academic Department to implement training for students in 7-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Meeting Date:** November 1, 2018

**Subject:** Approve Board Policy (BP) 5141.52 Suicide Prevention  
**LCAP Goal(s):** Safe, Emotionally Healthy and Engaged Students

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# Sacramento City USD

## Board Policy

### Suicide Prevention

BP 5141.52

Students

~~The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and that all suicide threats must be taken seriously. The Superintendent or designee shall establish~~

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~~suicidal students.~~

~~The Superintendent or designee shall incorporate suicide prevention instruction into the curriculum.~~

~~The Superintendent or designee shall also offer parent education or information on the youth suicide problem and the district's suicide prevention curriculum.~~

~~Suicide prevention training for certificated and classified staff shall be designed to help staff recognize sudden changes in students' appearance, personality or behavior which may indicate suicidal intentions, help students of all ages develop a positive self and a realistic attitude towards potential accomplishments, identify helpful community resources, and follow procedures established by the Superintendent or designee for intervening when a student attempts, threatens or discloses the desire to commit suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of a trained district employee/nurse or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.~~

(cf. 1020 -Youth Services)

(cf. 4131 -Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 -Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 -Staff Development)

(cf. 6164.2 -Guidance/Counseling Services)

~~Staff shall report suicidal threats or statements to the principal or designee, who shall report the threats or statements to the student's parents/guardians unless such report is prohibited by or inconsistent with the law. The statements shall be subject to laws governing student privacy.~~

(cf. 5141 -Health Care and Emergencies)

Legal Reference:  
EDUCATION CODE

49602 Confidentiality of student information  
49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors  
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE  
5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

~~Management Resources:~~

~~CDE PUBLICATIONS~~

~~Suicide Prevention Program for California Schools, 1987~~

~~Health Framework for California Public Schools, 1994~~

Policy SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted: November 16, 1998 Sacramento, California

revised: April 15, 2002

# Sacramento City Unified School District Board Policy

## Student Suicide Prevention Policy BP 5141.52

The Governing Board of SCUSD recognizes that suicide is the second leading cause of preventable death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider and attempt suicide (17 percent and over 8 percent of high school students, respectively) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The possibility of suicidal ideation and suicide requires vigilant attention from our district staff. As a result, we are ethically responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicide attempts and suicides. We also are committed to creating safe and nurturing campuses that minimize suicidal ideation in students, especially those students most at risk.

Recognizing that it is the duty of the district to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students in grades K-12 and staff against self-harm, suicide attempts and deaths, and other trauma associated with suicide. This includes ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. The emotional wellness of students greatly impacts school attendance and educational success; therefore, this policy shall be paired with other policies that support the emotional and behavioral wellness of students.

This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities increase identification of those at risk of suicide, increase help-seeking behavior, and decrease suicide risk and suicidal behaviors. Empirical evidence refutes a common belief that talking about suicide can increase risk or “place the idea in someone’s mind.”

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or Designee shall develop strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, as well as strategies for identifying mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior.

The Superintendent or Designee shall develop and implement preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include the following:

### Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention

The Superintendent or Designee shall involve district-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers), administrators, other district staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local



- o How to respond appropriately to a student who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and an immediate referral for a suicide risk assessment; and
- o Emphasis on reducing stigma associated with mental illness and that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.

## 2. Annual Staff Training

- ” In addition to initial orientations to the core components of suicide prevention, ongoing annual staff professional development will include the following:
  - o The impact of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health;
  - o Common misconceptions about suicide;
  - o School, district and community suicide prevention resources;
  - o Appropriate messaging about suicide (correct terminology, safe messaging guidelines, stigma reduction);
  - o The factors associated with suicide (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors);
  - o How to identify a student who may be at risk of suicide;
  - o How to talk with a student who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal;
  - o How to appropriately respond and link the student to supports based on district guidelines;
  - o District-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk;
  - o District-approved procedures for supporting a student returning to school after exhibiting suicidal behavior;
  - o Responding after a suicide occurs (see Postvention section).
  
- ” The professional development will include additional information regarding groups of students empirically determined to be at elevated risk for suicide, which includes, but are not limited to, the following groups of students:
  - o Affected by suicide;

- o With a history of suicidal ideation or attempts;
- o With disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders;
- o Who express, or are perceived to express, diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities;
- o Experiencing housing instability;
- o In the child welfare system;
- o Experiencing immigration related stress; and/or
- o Who have suffered traumatic experiences, including bullying, discrimination or harassment.

#### C. Advanced Specialized Staff Training (Assessment)

Additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to district-employed mental health professionals (school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers) on a recurring basis.

#### D. Employee Qualifications and Sc an.

implementation of this policy.



shall only be shared as is necessary for safety.

#### Role of SCUSD Suicide Assessment Certified District Employed Mental Health Professional

1. Certified district- employed MHPs trained in suicide risk assessment will administer the district approved suicide risk assessment tool.

2. If the student is deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-injury, the suicide assessment professional will contact the parent/guardian/caregiver (if perceived safe to do so) and principal to discuss the situation and develop a plan to ensure the student's safety. Both the student and parent/guardian/caregiver will at a minimum be provided with a safety plan that includes but is not limited to the following information:

- " Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources for counseling and mental health services
- " Local suicide prevention hotline number
- " Sacramento County Intake Stabilization Unit contact information
- " Additional resources and follow-up as appropriate

3. No disclosure shall be made to the student's parent/guardian/caregiver when there is reasonable cause to believe that the disclosure would result in a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. In the case of non-disclosure to parent/guardian/caregiver, staff should consult with another certified district employed mental health professional, and must report safety/welfare concerns to child protective services and/or law enforcement. Documentation of this decision should be made on the suicide risk assessment disposition summary.

4. If the student is assessed to be at imminent risk of suicide or self-injury, the certified district employed mental health professional is to remain with the student, ensuring safety until an appropriate disposition plan can be developed that includes the provision of adequate supervision. It is recommended that there be at least two staff present with the student (including the mental health professional) until the student is transferred to appropriate care. If the student refuses supervision, staff will follow school protocol for calling 911, including a secondary call to the Safe Schools Office/ SRO Sergeant.

5. For all students assessed for suicide risk or risk of self-harm the certified district employed MHP sD 4(h)10(er157002 Tw -36.3 -1.15 Td [(w)16(28 0 0.04(t)2(ud)10(e1T w)16(i)6(t)

disseminated to all parents/guardians/caregivers, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the resources available.

#### Role of Student

Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt. Confidentiality shall be maintained by school staff whenever possible. SCUSD will inform students of school-based and community based supports.

#### B. Intervention Plan for In- School Suicide Attempts

If a suicide attempt is made during the school day on campus, it is important to remember that the health and safety of the student and those around them is critical. The following steps should be implemented:

- ” Follow school protocol for calling 911, including a secondary call to the Safe Schools Office/SRO Sergeant, and provide as much information about any suicide note, medications taken, and access to weapons, if applicable;
- ” Remain calm. Remember the student is overwhelmed, confused, and emotionally distressed;
- ” Move all other students out of the immediate area and assess for any other students in need of support;
- ” Immediately contact the administrator or district employed mental health professional staff;
- ” If needed, provide medical first aid until a medical professional is available;
- ” Parents/guardians/caregivers should be contacted as soon as possible (if perceived as safe to do so);
- ” Do not send the student away or leave them alone, including accompanying them to the restroom;
- ” Provide comfort to the student. Listen and encourage the student to talk, if this helps calm them;
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