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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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Action Required
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 Informational

BULLETIN NO. 018-20 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: New Requirements Related to School-Based Threat Assessment Programs
Policies and Procedures

CONTACT: Ella DeVerse, School Safety Center Program Supervisor
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PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

[Second Substitute House Bill 1216 \(2019–20\) Session Law](#) relates to nonfirearm measures to increase school safety and student well-being in public schools. Sections in 2SHB 1216 (2019–20) include new requirements for the adoption of threat assessment policies and procedures and the creation of School-Based Threat Assessment Programs in school districts. This bulletin is a summary of the new requirements related to the creation of threat assessment teams and the policy and procedure, which are now codified in [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.300.640](#).

Section 6 of 2SHB 1216 (2019–20) requires Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), to develop a model policy and procedure to establish a School-Based Threat Assessment Program. This policy and procedure must meet the requirements of section 5 of 2SHB 1216 (2019–20). The model [policy](#) and [procedure](#) has been posted to the website of the [State School Safety Center](#), required by section 2 of 2SHB 1216 (2019–20).

Section 5 of 2SHB 1216 (2019–20) adds a new section to [RCW 28A.320](#) requiring the creation and implementation of School-Based Threat Assessment Programs in school districts.

NEW REQUIREMENTS

ADOPT SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

By the beginning of the 2020–21 school year, each school district shall adopt a policy and procedure to establish a School-Based Threat Assessment Program that meets the requirements of subsection (1) of [RCW 28A.320.123](#). The school district policy and procedure must be consistent with the model policy and procedure developed under section 6 of 2SHB 1216 (2019–20), and with other school district policies, procedures, and plans addressing safe and supportive learning environments.

IMPLEMENT SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

RCW 28A.320.123 requires school districts to implement School-Based Threat Assessment Programs by the start of the 2020–2021 school year. School-Based Threat Assessment Programs must:

(1) At a minimum:

- (a) Provide for timely and methodical school-based threat assessment and management;
- (b) Be prompted by the behavior of a student rather than some combination of a student's demographic and personal characteristics;
- (c) Convene a multidisciplinary, multiagency team, including special education teachers and practicing educational staff associates, to:
 - (i) Identify and assess the behavior of a student that is threatening, or potentially threatening, to self, other students, staff, school visitors, or school property;
 - (ii) Gather and analyze information about the student's behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat that focuses on situational variables, rather than the student's demographic or personal characteristics;
 - (iii) Depending on the determined level of concern, develop and implement intervention strategies to manage the student's behavior in ways that promote a safe, supportive teaching and learning environment, without excluding the student from the school; and
 - (iv) In the case of the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student with disabilities, align intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program or plan developed under section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 by coordinating with the student's individualized education program or section 504 plan team;
- (d) Create guidelines for each threat assessment team to collect, report, and review quantitative data on its activities; and

(e) Prohibit suspension or expulsion based merely on threat assessment referral or performance.

(2) By the beginning of the 2020–21 school year, each school district shall adopt a policy and procedure to establish a school-based threat assessment program that meets the requirements of subsection (1) of this section. The school district policy and procedure must be consistent with the model policy and procedure developed under RCW 28A.300.640, and with other school district policies, procedures, and plans addressing safe and supportive learning environments.

(3) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "School-based threat assessment" means the formal process, established by a school district, of evaluating the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student, and the circumstances surrounding the threat, to uncover any facts or evidence that the threat is likely to be carried out.

(b) "School-based threat management" means the development and implementation of a plan to manage or reduce the threatening, or potentially threatening, behavior of a student in a way that increases the physical and psychological safety of students, staff, and visitors, while providing for the education of all students.

DISTRIBUTE SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

School districts must share this policy and procedure with parents or guardians, students, volunteers, and school employees in accordance with rules adopted by OSPI. To do so, OSPI recommends school districts use the same method used to provide annual notice of the district's discrimination complaint procedure, as outlined in RCW 28A.300.640.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Under [RCW 28A.310.510](#), funds are appropriated to each Educational Service District (ESD) to establish a Regional School Safety Center (RSSC) as provided in this section. The regional school safety centers working in collaboration with one another and the state School Safety Center, established in [RCW 28A.300.630](#), form a statewide network for school safety. The purpose of this statewide network is to provide coordination of school safety efforts throughout the state and to provide school safety resources to the school districts in each educational service district region.

Working in collaboration with OSPI and the statewide network, each RSSC must provide to the school districts in its region:

(b) School-based threat assessment coordination that, at a minimum, includes:

- (i) Providing training and technical assistance regarding the use of the model policy and procedure to establish a school-based threat assessment program, developed under RCW 28A.300.640;
- (ii) Assisting with ongoing identification and implementation of best practices for school-based threat assessment programs, described under RCW 28A.320.123; and
- (iii) Building partnerships with community partners, such as behavioral health providers, law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, juvenile justice organizations, and child welfare agencies, for the purpose of implementing school-based threat assessment programs that comply with best practices.

A list of OSPI and ESD contacts can be found on the OSPI [School-Based Threat Assessment](#) webpage.

OSPI and the ESDs stand ready to assist you in the implementation of your School-Based Threat Assessment programs.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Ella DeVerse, School Safety Center Program Supervisor, at 360-725-6031 or email ella.deverse@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins and Memos](#) page of the OSPI website.

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